



Best Practices Case Study

www.kspartners.org

March 2011

Editor's note: The Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force sponsors the Friends of Education Awards. To recognize exemplary partner development, Kansas Partners in Education sponsors the Partner Activity award category. Each nominee is a business, company, or agency that has provided an on-going partner activity over an extended period of time (minimum of three years), by means of volunteer time, services, finances or other types of support, in amount that exceeds typical collaboration from a private or public institution. This case study provides information about a 2010 Partner Activity nominee and is an educational service to KSPE members, their organizations, and prospective partners.

Volunteer Rewards: Recognition and Appreciation

By Debi Corrigan, Wichita Public Schools, debicorrigan@usd259.net

April 17-April 23, 2011 is National School Volunteer Recognition Week.

We ask volunteers to do an important job which deserves to be taken seriously, but the volunteer experience can also be a source of pleasure and joy. A cooperative effort of the total staff and student body can make the school climate reinforcing to volunteers.

Don't let volunteering be a thankless job. The number one method for retaining volunteers is to make sure they know that they are appreciated. Recognition and appreciation should come from different people in different ways. There are many ways to thank and recognize your volunteers.

Make it a priority. Recognizing the work of volunteers is crucial for any organization that wants to retain them and attract others. Designate someone in your organization to be responsible for ensuring that ongoing recognition of volunteers takes place.

Do it often. Recognition of volunteers should happen on a year-round, frequent and informal basis – begin with saying "Thank you" often!

Do it in different ways. Vary your recognition efforts from the informal thank you and spontaneous treats, to more formal events, such as dinners and awards.

Be sincere. Make each occasion you use to recognize your volunteers meaningful and an opportunity to truly reflect on his/her value to your organization.

Recognize the person, not the work. Phrase recognition to emphasize the contribution of the individual, not the end result. "You did a great job!" as opposed to "This is a great job!"

Make it appropriate to the achievement. For example, a paper certificate accompanied by a private thank you may be appropriate for a few months of service but a public dinner and engraved plaque may better suit 10 years of volunteerism.

Be consistent. Make sure whatever standards of recognition you establish can be consistently maintained by your organization in years to come. Holding a volunteer recognition dinner one year sets up expectation for future volunteers.

Be timely. Try to arrange recognition soon after achievement has been reached – delaying until weeks or months later diminishes the value of your gratitude.

Make it unique. Getting to know each of your volunteers and their interests will help you learn how best to recognize each individual and make them feel special.

2010-11 KSPE BOARD MEMBERS

Co-Chairpersons:

Debi Corrigan, Wichita Public Schools

Paul Getto, Kansas Association of School Boards

Glenda Burkett, Credit Union of America, Wichita

Dave DePue, Ph.D., *The Capitol Commission* – Treasurer

Bill Frick, Shawnee Mission Public Schools

Leila Gallagher, YouthFriends of Kansas

Barbara Havlicek, KSU College of Education

Jackie Lugrand, Wichita Public Schools – Secretary

Kathy Toelkes, Kansas State Department of Education

Mike Willome, Ed.D., Wichita Public Schools

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Credit Union of America, Wichita

Shawnee Mission Public Schools

Wichita Public Schools

Kansas Partners in Education

P.O. Box 48052

Wichita KS 67201-8052

info@kspartners.org

© 2011 KSPE All Rights Reserved.